BIOGRAPHY OF NAJIBULLAH

Najibullah has headed the Republic of Afghanistan since May, 1986 when he was elevated to the post of General Secretary of the Ruling Peoples' Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). He assumed power with the help of the USSR, replacing long-time PDPA leader Babrak Karmal, who eventually left Afghanistan for the USSR for what were publicly described as "health reasons." Najibullah first became known to most Afghans as head of Khad, the regime's security service, and is associated with Khad's arrest, torture, and execution of many Afghans during the five years he headed the security service.

Born in 1947, Najibullah graduated from Habibia High School in Kabul in 1964. He immediately entered Kabul University and about this time joined the PDPA. Najibullah followed Babrak Karmal into the Parchami wing of the party when the PDPA split into Khalqi and Parchami factions in 1967, and wrote many articles for Parcham, the Parchami wing's newspaper in the late 1960s. Active in political clashes on Kabul University campus, Najibullah was twice jailed by the Zahir Shah government for his political activities. After eleven years at Kabul University, and much diversion into politics, Najibullah received his medical degree in 1975. However, he apparently has never practiced medicine.

Najibullah continued his active political life, after a brief stint in the military, and was appointed to the PDPA Central Committee in 1977. He apparently had little or no role in the April 1978 coup that killed Daoud and replaced him with a Khalqi-led government. Najibullah was sent into diplomatic exile as Ambassador to Iran shortly after the coup, only to be fired four months later for allegedly plotting against the Khalqi regime. Najibullah reportedly fled to Eastern Europe with a large amount of Afghan Embassy funds.

Within days of the December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Babrak Karmal and Najibullah returned to Afghanistan via the Soviet Union and were placed in power by Moscow as President and Security Chief respectively. Najibullah, with Soviet help, reorganized Khad into the most effective arm of regime control. Under Najibullah, Khad arrested thousands of Afghans on political grounds, large numbers of whom were tortured, executed, or both. Khad also led the regime's fight to undermine and divide the resistance not only through intimidation and repression, but also through the distribution of money, weapons and the spread of propaganda.

By 1985, with the resistance still strong and Khad functioning efficiently, Najibullah officially resigned his Khad post to become PDPA Party Secretary. Six months later, after apparent Soviet dissatisfaction with Babrak Karmal's lack of progress in controlling the resistance, Najibullah was placed in power over the first weekend in May 1986, with the aid of the tactical placement of Soviet tanks and troops in Kabul. For several months afterward, Najibullah tried to consolidate his power in the face of open opposition from Karmal supporters, most of whom were associated with the PDPA's Parcham wing, the same wing to which Najibullah belonged.

Since 1986, Najibullah has spearheaded a "National Reconciliation" program, aimed less at ending the war and more at dividing the resistance and retaining PDPA control. He has used his strong public speaking skills and regime-controlled media in Kabul to try to convince foreign journalists and international audiences that his regime deserves legitimacy. Most recently, he has revamped the Constitution, called a regime-controlled Loya Jirga in Kabul, and appointed the military governor of Herat province, Fazle Haq Khaliqyar, as Prime Minister. Most observers, however, believe that Najibullah and Moscow retain the essential control of the Kabul regime.

A Pashtun from the Ahmadzai branch of the Ghilzai tribe, Najibullah is originally from Paktia Province. His father, who died in 1983, worked at one time for the Jalalabad to Peshawar bus line and later as an Afghan Government consular and trade official in Peshawar under the Zahir Shah government. Najibullah is one of the oldest of 13 children, only six of whom are living. Two brothers have regime positions and two sisters live in Afghanistan. A third brother defected in 1988 and lives in the United States with his family. Najibullah's mother lives in Afghanistan. Najibullah is married and he and his wife Fatana have several children.